Dual Sport News

... Newsletter of the ***Dual Sport Owners Group***

September/October 1999

Kawasaki 2000
Super Sherpa

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PERSPECTIVE

Gino Pokluda

REALITY

Reality has a nasty habit of revealing itself at the most inopportune times. We cruise along in our lives, usually burning the candle at both ends, and somehow manage juggle life's little pleasures. But every once in a while, the ends of the candle meet unexpectedly and you are faced with the tough job of prioritizing the important things in your life and letting some things, also important but not essential, slide off into the abyss.

Reality revealed itself to me at 11:30 p.m. on July 23 on a crowded 737 at 35,000 ft, somewhere above Flagstaff, Arizona. That is the time I finished reading the *Adventure Motorbiking Handbook*, took a long swallow out of my Miller Genuine Draft and opened my daily planner to look for possible dates for an overnight weekend ride. I knew I was in trouble when I turned the page to the last week of October and I still had not come across a free weekend. As a matter of fact, a free day for a short day ride was impossible to find also. Open evenings were also rare which was equally depressing, as that is usually the only time when I get to do maintenance on my bikes. The schedule was looking dismal. Another long drink out of the MGD and I knew I had to do something. I had to reprioritize my life and I had known it for some time. The cold hard facts were, that the ever increasing obligations to my family, church, community and job were crowding out the other pleasures of my life, like motorcycling, running, biking and being editor of *Dual Sport News*.

After much though, consideration and a few restless nights, I have decided to turn over the helm of *Dual Sport News* to a new editor and publisher. By the time your read this, all *DSN* material, lists and funds will have been transferred to its new publishing team, Kurt Simpson and Ron LaMantia. Kurt Simpson, editor, is familiar to most of you as the past editor of the "KLR Page" and co-coordinator of the 1999 Utah Get-Together. Kurt brings a very special element to *DSN* as a knowledgeable source dual sport information and insight. His fluid style and excellent writing skills will bring a breath of fresh air to these pages. Ron LaMantia, a.k.a "Redondo Ron" will be the publisher for *DSN*. Ron brings a wealth of knowledge of the printing industry to *DSN*, which will undoubtedly help *DSN* grow. Like Kurt, Ron has a very laid back style that will easily fit into the *DSN* mission of bringing the most specific dual sport information to the DS enthusiast possible.

These are very exciting times for *Dual Sport News* and I know that the readership will join and support its new leaders in making it a quality publication. Please note the changes in mailing address and payment information on the sidebar of this page.

I will continue to contribute to *DSN* as a contributing editor. You will get to read my thoughts on dual sport and motorcycling in general in a column titled "As I See It" but it should be understood, however, that Kurt and Ron are now the leaders of *DSN*.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of you who have brought this publication to this point. I can honestly say that I have met some truly extraordinary people while serving as editor of *DSN* and it has been a privilege to serve you all. I would also like to thank my wife, Frankie, and daughter, Roxanne, for their patience over the past three years. I'm not sure how many times I said, "I'll be downstairs in a minute" only to finally make my way to living room a couple of hours later, but I'm sure they'd be rich if given a dime for every occurrence.

They say old doors close so new doors can open. I think that is true in this case and that a bold new chapter is about to begin for *DSN* and you as readers. Thank you all for a great three years.

Gino Pokluda

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WHAT'S NEW

Cover Photo

The 2000 Kawasaki Super Sherpa cuts a nice profile which is almost retro.

CREDIT

The cover photograph on the July/August 1999 issue was taken by Lloyd Johnson in Canyonlands. Lloyd also wrote the "Camping Light" article in that same issue.

THANKS!

To all who made this 20 page issue possible.

Check us Out!

www.dualsport.org
Webmaster, Bill Haycock.

KLR650 Electronic Mailing List

The KLR650 mailing list is easily one of the more entertaining lists on the net and well worth subscribing to. To subscribe, simply

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Aerostich Evap-O-Danna

Wet it, wear it, wipe it, wring it, wash it, re-use it. This Aerostich Evap-O-Danna is made from a new technical combination of soft synthetic fabrics to soak up and hold more water than ordinary cloths. It is more comfortable to wear compared to gel/crystal filled fabric tube ties made for neck cooling, and more useful too. The Evap-O-Dannas soft material is similar to the stuff used in many I super cloth infomercial products and also for superabsorbent specialized 'camping towels' ...so it makes a great washcloth or drying towel, too. It's black color permits quick drying in the sun, absorbs heat on cooler days and camouflages stains between washes.

In hot weather, wet the Evap-O-Danna and wrap it around your neck for a cool solution to blistering summer rides. The more saturated your Evap-O-Danna is, the longer it will provide cooling.... and this miracle fabric can hold up to nine times it weight in water. Cooling effects last between 30 minutes and several hours, depending on your bike's wind protection (fairing), your wind speed and the ambient temperature and humidity. For cold weather, use it dry, fastening around neck as a bandanna. An Evap-O-Danna can be tucked inside your jacket to be ready for all conditions from hot/dry to cold/wet. It also makes a great general purpose rag for drying off a wet saddle, wiping up a spill, and cleaning a faceshield or windshield. May be used as an impromptu loincloth by the extremely skinny.

Aerostich Evap-O-Danna Cat. No. 2250 $7.00 To order or for further information, call Aerostich/Riderwearhouse at 800 222 1994.

The Adventure Motorbiking Handbook

Chris Scott
Published by Compass Star Publications LTD.
Available from White Horse Press (800.531.1133)
RiderWearhouse (800.222.1994)
CycoActive (800.491.CYCO)

Chris Scott has done an excellent job in putting together a comprehensive book on the basics of adventure touring or "overlanding" as it is referred to in the book. One uniqueness of the "Handbook" is understanding the subtle differences between the English language as spoken in the United States and as spoken in England. The majority of the books is spent giving plain and simple advice on how to deal with the inevitable crisis one would face while touring in off-road conditions. A great portion of the 347 page book mainly deals with desert travel as in Africa, but other areas are covered also. There is a section on how to set up a bike and numerous smaller writings from travelers and their experiences. There is also a section about women traveling alone and yes, it is written by a female. The choosing a bike section is basic but does have some good points worth reading and pays tribute to BMWs as one would expect. Oddly, KLR650's are mostly missing from this informative piece. All in all a valuable read for anyone planning on adventure touring or, I mean, overlanding.

2000 Kawasaki Super Sherpa **Gino Pokluda**

So, did you hear about the new dual sport out for 2000? It's a versatile bike loaded with features like gold anodized rims, stainless exhaust system, computer instrument panel complete with clock and two trip meters, and a nice wide, comfortable seat. It's light, agile and has a semi retro look to it. No, its not a BMW or some exotic European brand, it's the Kawasaki 250 Super Sherpa. Okay, maybe it's a stretch to think the Sherpa will appeal to the exotic snobs, but the bike is a milestone when you take a long look at the whole package, i.e. the intended market and the machine itself.

Kawasaki makes no bones about it, the Super Sherpa was not designed to be a all out dual sport or adventure bike. It is targeted to be an all-purpose run about. What is unique about the SS is that even though it is a low budget bike, Kawasaki has blessed it with great features and an appealing style, something that has long since been missing in this class of motorcycle. As compared to the KLR250 which it replaces, the SS a very handsome machine thanks in part to the tasteful silver, olive and gold paint scheme. You could almost buy a Sherpa, haul it directly to the local bike show and get best of show in the vintage dual sport category, that is, until the judges see the LCD display screen that provides the rider with all the vital info plus two trip meters and a clock -optional if even available on bikes costing 3 times as much. I get criticized often for getting hung up the looks of dual sport bikes. That may be so. But the truth is that we all want our bikes to have a look, whether it be rugged, adventure looking, racer wannabe, vintage custom or rat bike. If you say looks aren't important in a dual sport, seek a professional that specializes in denial. With its polished triple clamp, chrome bars and conservative paint, the Sherpa is hopefully a sign of things to come in the industry. Another nice extra is the drilled and tapped lower triple clamp that allows a high fender to be me mounted in the event the owner gets tired of the stock low fender.

Enough talk about looks. How does it work? First let me say that the Sherpa is designed to compete with dual sports like the Yamaha XT225 Serow , TW200 and Suzuki DR200 rather than the likes of the Suzuki DR350. It is a light duty, low seat height trail bike. A pull of the triple clamp mounted choke and a thumb of the starter button and the little Kawasaki starts quickly with a healthy exhaust note for a 250. Let her idle a bit and you are ready to ride. Controls are standard fair with push to cancel turn signals and easy pull brake and clutch levers. The seat is nice and comfortable and leg and arm ergonomics would perfect for riders in the 5'4" to 6' height range. The view from the cockpit is pure dual sport with the exception of the LCD instrument panel. There are two soft touch button that allow you to scroll through two trip meters and a clock. The low seat height –despite having an 18" rear wheel- of the Sherpa will definitely be confidence inspiring for new or short-legged riders. Even after a good warm up, the Super Sherpa seems choked, most likely due to lean carburetion and restrictive exhaust and air intake. None-the-less, the Sherpa squirts through traffic nicely, thank you very much, and will keep up with traffic on the expressway thanks to an easy shifting 6 speed transmission. The unit I rode had the shift lever set a little too high which resulted in a missed shift here and there, but nothing that cannot be remedied in a few minutes by adjusting the lever down.

... Super Sherpa

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send the message "subscribe klr650" to majordomo@lists.xmission.com. To post a message to the list, send the message to **klr650@lists.xmission.com.**

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks go to R&S Kawasaki of Albuquerque, NM for the loan of the 2000 Kawasaki Super Sherpa for evaluation.

DUAL SPORT Mailing list

For those wanting a little more variety, there is DUST, the dual sport mailing list. Send the message "**subscribe dust firstname lastname" to listproc@dorje.com.**

News From Dual Star

Givi Side Carrier Racks

Dual Star has developed and is now producing side

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The Super Sherpa has a nice feel, but on the heavy side of neutral and makes lane changes and splitting are effortless thanks to its small packaging. Barreling down the hard surface road is fun and easy, but things loose their rosey color when you roll onto rough, pot holed surface roads. With its limited suspension travel, and soft springs, the Sherpa becomes easily overwhelmed. Riding onto some of the roads where I test dual sports, the Sherpa immediately protested by bottoming out its rear suspension on a rut that my both my DR350 and KLR650 ignore. Cranking up the preload would be a must on this bike for anyone weighing more than 150 pounds. Once I realized this limitation, I spent most of my time standing on the pegs and riding a tad bit slower. In this mode, the Sherpa will literally go anywhere you point it. It's wide bar and semi trials bike design, allow it to ridden extremely slow. Take this baby to some field events and you are guaranteed the Slow Ride award. The very narrow tank and low center of gravity allows the rider to get their weight forward which should make riding in loose material a cake walk, just remember to lever on some decent tires before you get too adventurous. On the down side, the chances of seeing a large plastic tank from Acerbis, Clark or IMS are next to nil due to the unique styling of the stock steel cell.

Gold rims, a stainless exhaust, wide seat and neat paint scheme give the Super Sherpa a high dollar look. Note that the turn signals are identical to those found on KLR650's

The Super Sherpa comes with better front binders than the KLR650!

In summary, the Super Sherpa will most likely be seen riding on the back of an RV or tooling around a school campus or resting under the porch of a mountain cabin after a day of running about on mountain trails and fire roads. You will not see a Sherpa crossing the Sahara or riding from Alaska to Argentina. That's not necessarily a bad thing either. Kawasaki defined a target market and hit is square on the head by building a purposeful machine that will serve as daily transportation and weekend trail rider flawlessly.

The KLR Page:

The Strange World of Dr. Moreau by Skip "Dr. Moreau" Faulkner

KLR Engine Isolator Mounts

Over the years, the most common complaint I have heard about single cylinder motorcycles is excessive vibration. Vibration announces itself to the rider in the form of blurry mirrors, numb or tingling hands and tingling feet. To the bike, long-term effects can be a cracked or short-lived exhaust system, shortened bulb life, shortened fuse life, and constantly loosening fasteners.

It wasn't that long ago that singles were generally thought of as good for short-hop trips, cruising, commuting, and off-road recreation. Today, singles like the venerable KLR are now ridden longer distances and for longer duration, consequently, vibration can become an issue

EARLY EXPERIMENTS ON THE ISLAND

In my case, the only symptom of vibration that bothered me was blurry mirrors. Considering the safety factors and problems I had been encountering as my night riding in traffic increased, I decided that a remedy was in order, and took on the challenge.

I first tried a number of relatively easy approaches including: BB`s and sealant in the handlebars, different handgrips, Honda XRL mirrors, weighted mirrors, silicone in the mirror housing, rubber washers, and finally Suzuki GS mirror mounts. All failed to solve the problem. After more than two months of these scattered experiments, I finally attacked the problem in a more logical manner, using my experience and education in the aircraft industry.

For true vibration damping, you must have isolation, and to have isolation, you must have deflection—opposite movement. To accomplish this, I cut my mirror stems a carefully determined distance from the mirror. I spliced the stem back together by inserting each end into two inches of thick-walled neoprene tubing, with a disc of rubber between the ends (to prevent contact) and machined an adjustable two inch steel tube that would hold this assembly together with three cap-screws.

The result of the mirror "gene splice" was fantastic. Crystal clear mirrors at all rpms and speeds except idle. I also had the added bonus of less mirror breakage during a fall, as the mirrors will now bend at the joint instead of snapping. Having truly warmed to the project. I thought, why follow the path of many doctors that only treat symptoms when I should be going after the primary origin of the vibration—the engine.

I chose to bypass the most obvious remedy, dynamically balancing the engine, as this would be beyond the abilities of many owners, and besides, simpler is most often better. I chose to damp the engine harmonics with isolator mounts.

The KLR650 has four rigid engine mount points: the forward mount on the front downtube, the upper mount above the cylinder, the swing-arm through-bolt boss on the rear of the engine, and the rear lower mount below the swing-arm. The engine needs to be isolated at each of these

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carrier racks that will carry Givi Monokey luggage. As you now, the Five Stars equivalent was pulled from the US market leaving a huge void for those who prefer to use Givi. These side carrier racks are 100% Givi compatible and have been field tested.

Dual Star will also be importing the new Ortleib clip-on style dry saddle bags. These are identical to the Dry Saddle Bags we have all come to love except they clip to a tubular frame style side rack. They will work on the new Dual Star Givi side carriers and may be compatible with others.

Dual Star is also developing side carrier racks made specifically for Pelican cases. Mike wanted me to also let everyone know that these products are first being deleoped for KLR650's, but units for the BMW F650 and Suzuki DR650 will be along soon.

Finally, for those who love the stock tires on

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... Dr. Moreau

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the KLR650 (Dunlop K750) Mike has come across a large quantity of factory take-offs that are available now. These are basically like-new tires that have been mounted and taken off once. They have no miles and have most likely never touched the ground, but cannot be sold as new. Prices were not set by press time, but Mike says the price will be very good.

For more information on all of these new products, call Mike Walburn at Dual Star 800-GO-N-RIDE or 425-776-7433.

NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE

Articles for the next issue of DSN must be mailed to the new address no later than **October 1, 1999**

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points with the exception of the swing-arm mount.

Since Kawasaki chose to use the rear of the engine to aid the frame in securing the swing-arm, this point must remain rigidly secure. Due to the inertial movement of the engine while operating (vertical component) I chose to design the mount system to allow minimal engine movement in an arc, pivoting on the rigidly attached swing-arm bolt. Due to the harmonic signature of the KLR engine, I determined that very small rebounds (.0322") at the three chosen mounts is all that is needed to effectively damp most of the vibration.

BEFORE YOU BRAND EM', YOU GOT TO CATCH EM'

The first thing to do was to find a rubber/neoprene isolator I could design the mounts around. I finally located one from a company that manufactures the aircraft engine isolators I use at work. One of their engineers was of immense help and worked with me for over a month, trying to match the right material density to the harmonics of the engine. This is a tedious process, as the material density is dependent on frequency, number of isolators per mount, needed deflection and general operating conditions.

The next step was to determine the frequency range that I wanted to damp. I used a dynamic frequency analyzer that I use at work to dynamically balance aircraft engines and rotating drivetrain. After several runs under varied conditions, loads, and rpms (3500 to 5000), I got the frequency I needed, and could now match the isolator material. This step was critical. In the realm of vibration isolation and damping, mismatches can actually worsen vibration and damage the components involved. In other words, just throwing on some rubber mounts can actually destroy the engine and frame.

Having determined the isolator density, composition, and damper design, I began to design and machine the mounts that the isolators would be installed in. The upper mount was machined out of solid stock steel and then tempered. When I got to the forward mount, I decided to try aluminum, and machined a piece out of solid stock 7075 T6. After four thousand miles, the aluminum appears to be doing great.

The rear mount was the real challenge. This mount is very limited in available space and attach points. My first design required dropping the swing-arm and removing some material from the rear lower mount boss on the engine. Eventually, with the help of one of my customers who does design work, I arrived at a floating mount design that does not require removing any of the swing-arm or suspension parts. The isolator housing is designed for an interference fit on the welded washer on the outside flange that the mount bolt passes through. It is attached and held in place by the compression induced by two flush cap bolts that thread into the through bar that will replace the mount bolt.

This system will not detract from the appearance of the bike. Among the KLR aficionados present at the Moab '99 Get-Together, only a few people actually spotted the installed mounts. Most people had to have them pointed.

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... Dr. Moreau

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The engine isolation system is a work in progress. I am accumulating mileage to insure that there are no problems. I also am monitoring my exhaust system, as it is still rigidly attached to the frame. With the loose tolerances designed into the first pipe hanger mount, combined with the minuscule movement of the engine, everything seems to be working well.

I am testing the system with both a sixteen and fifteen tooth countershaft sprocket as they will have different harmonic signatures. If all continues to go well, then two or three kits will be beta tested by other KLR owners. This will allow me to assess the variations and differences in other bikes as every engine has its own individual harmonics. If the results are still favorable, complete turnkey kits will be made available.

I estimate installation at 45 minutes using only basic tools and a torque wrench. Disassembly is limited to removal of the fuel tank and the stock mount brackets. Sliding the chain off the countersprocket will aid in the installation of the rear lower mount, but is not necessary.

I am excited about the early results of the project. Reducing felt vibration is only one of the goals in this modification. Based on my experience with aircraft, I expect improvements in engine vibration damping to reduce component and fatigue failures. I also expect to see increased operating life of associated and attached parts. Just guess how long a rigidly mounted GPS would last on a vibration isolated KLR650. I`ll keep posting on the progress. Now, back to the laboratory.

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Travels:

Copper Canyon Part II (Continued from May/June 1999 Issue) by Dan Rosen

The first part of this article appeared in the May/June 1999 issue. A virtual scrapbook for this article is found at www.io.com/~danrosen/sierramadre.htm It shows just what type of adventure you can have in Mexico's Sierra Madre with a stock KLR-650. A complementary video tape of riding Copper Canyon is also available to interested Dual Sport readers by e-mailing danrosen@io.com

One mile in altitude and located at the foothills of the Urique canyon system is a nineteenth century Colorado style lodge called the Oso. Adobe and wood in construction, the rooms are clean, heated by firewood in the winter and have private baths with hot and cold water. The food is excellent and the surroundings pristine. Without electricity the stars seem to drop into your lap at night. It is from here that the adventure begins.

When you leave this lodge for a several day moto excursion to the Sea of Cortez, you will begin a journey that few people can even imagine. The road takes the form of a single-lane rough cut dirt trail. Travel in these parts is generally marked by time and weather conditions, not miles.

My friend Jerry Mark just returned from the Moab rally this past June, where he rode his KLR-650 and had a great time. From what Jerry described, the trails and roads in Utah were probably very similar to what the Sierra Tarahumara has to offer. Jerry and I road the basic Copper Canyon route from Creel to Batopilas, and again from Creel to Urique this past January. We also had a great time and this trip is featured on our video.

The basic Copper Canyon roads are, in my opinion, very do-able by any careful dual-sport rider, even with little or modest riding experience. However, as you leave the canyon towns and travel deep into the Sierra Madre and to the coast off-road, you need some experience. The riding at Moab probably provided some great preparation for this type of ride.

Like Batopilas, many of the mountain towns served as mining centers in the 1880s and every now and then you come to an abandoned rail tunnel. These make really fun dual-sport short cuts through the mountains. The wooden ties have long since been removed. The Chinipas river valley is absolutely gorgeous. Cowboys and Indians are everywhere and the two steam narrow-gauge rail locomotives, which once worked up in the surrounding tunnels and mountains, are now to be found in the towns' two squares.

After crossing the Chinipas river by bike or by hand operated ferry, you face some serious mountain climbs before you get to the Baja looking trails leading to the coast. The riding is great but you have to watch for sand. Relax at the coast and have dinner at the beach by Topolobampo. On a more southern route back, a small diesel powered ferry that can hold one small car and some bikes shuttles you across one of the areas many lakes. It really is quite an experience. As the lake level varies, you never quite know where it puts in or out. I couldn't believe where it once docked. It put in by a sandy steep embankment that looked more like a wall than an inclined off ramp. I didn't think the KLR or I could do it, but I had no choice so I gave it gas and held on tight. We made it off and up the embankment just fine, however; I think it was more to the credit of the KLR than me.

One of my favorite rides is going from Batopilas, south through Satevo. From here there is a thirteen mile climb starting from a little over sea level and rising up to around 8500 feet. When the road is bad, many rock piles and rocky shelves present themselves. When the road is horrible, you wonder why you are doing this, but quickly remind yourself that the relationship between man-and-machine is always driving us to seek new challenges and we are happy to take this one on.

The views and drop-offs are fantastic. The best part is yet to come, however; when you end up looking over the Fuerte river valley. Miles upon miles of primitive and ranching territory. To me it feels like dual-sport heaven. The ancient mission and cemetery at Tubares is located south of the river. Many missionaries and settlers passed through here in the early and late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It looks just about the same today as it must have to these early pioneers. Fresh spring water that you would pay a fortune for here in the states, is available at some of the ranch houses.

The treck through the Piedras Verdes mining roads is also incredible. As the elevations hover around 9000 feet, the area is thick with pine forests. Abandoned mines are all over the place. Occasionally a CJ-5 with some foreign mining engineers are to be seen. They like to keep current mining operations secret, so they have little to say. Of course they really can't go anywhere you can't, and you can have a lot more fun doing it.

As for gas, I generally carry my own, however; some of the small towns have gas available at one of the homes or general stores. If you see a ranch house with a pick-up, they often can sell you some. At best it is 87 octane and clean. A siphon hose is a good thing to carry.

Weather plays a big part in traveling these parts. May is the driest month, and river crossings will be easiest. July and August are the wettest months, but the vegetation will be most beautiful. Generally spring and fall are the best times to ride. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. If you want to travel in a group with support services, I would be happy to send you information. Until then, adios amigos and great riding. e-mail at: danrosen@io.com or www.rosensrides.com

1996 DR650 Feedback by Bert Fox

Part1

I recently found myself contemplating the purchase of another dualsport motorcycle. My need corresponded with a change in lifestyle. I had relocated with my family to a remote mountain cabin in North Idaho about thirty miles from the Canadian border. My aged but nice 74 R75/6 BMW was not going to fill the bill as well as it has done so admirably in the past I had also owned an XR650L, a KLX650C, and a KLR. This time I was going to be searching for attributes that led me to the inevitable purchase of a used 1996 DR650SE.

I wanted engine cooling that was equal or better than that offered on the Kawasakis. When you plan on putting a lot of highway miles in all types of conditions, the aircooled only XR is likely to sustain top-end wear. The DR had the silicon-carbide cylinder coating for additional cooling capability and excellent durability like Kawasaki's Electrofusion. The Suzuki SACS system uses two oil pumps to allow low pressure-hi volume oiling and hi –pressure conventional lubricating and it has a large oil cooler mounted high on the right side much like the KLR's radiator. The oil capacity of 2-½ qt. is also a plus.

I wanted to improve on the front brake of the KLR. The DR had a larger front disc with dual piston caliper. If you have ever priced a similar upgrade to the KLR, you know it is expensive. Since I was shopping for a used motorcycle, the bargain price of the KLR was not an issue. Quite the contrary, KLR's are becoming popular and their resale value is often higher than the others are even though they're cheaper initially.

I also liked the more owner friendly servicing of the DR. The valves are adjusted with screw type adjusters and the cam(s) does not have to be removed to replace the shims as in the KLR. The suspension was also a salient point with me. The fork is a 43mm conventional unit that is a little beefier than the dated 38's on the KLR. The rear shock offered a remote reservoir gas unit with increased oil capacity over the KLR unit. In addition, the 10.2 inches of front and rear travel seemed a little more modern for today's dualsport needs than that offered by the aging KLR. Now that I have discussed all the reasons for selecting the big DR, how has it worked out? First of all, I found a really nice 96 DR650SE on the internet that was within my geographical area and price range,($3000) with 2,000 miles on it. It already had the aluminum barkbusters with optional plastic handguards, a DG aluminum skidplate, Answer aluminum handlebars, Suzuki's optional luggage rack, a full cover, factory service manual and had been upgraded(in my opinion) to a 520 Oring chain and sprockets. The DR comes with 525 chain which makes sprockets and chain expensive and not likely to be found in stock in most outback shops.

One of my concerns initially was the smaller tank when compared to the KLR. The day I picked up the DR and headed down the road, I quickly realized that the 175 mile range was not a

(Continued on page 18)

TECHNICAL INSIGHTS

By Elden Carl

I have not heard from the Israeli guys since they were at the tip of South America. Last I heard they were on their way to Brazil.

One of the great things about motorcycles is that the saying "bumper-to-bumper" does not apply. It's a great feeling to know that no matter how bad the traffic stoppage on these crazy Southern California freeways gets, I'll never be trapped if I'm on my bike.

A few months ago, I bought Sam Jones' 1993 DR350S aand headed south from the Los Angeles area pulling the DR on a trailer behind my truck. At about the halfway point on I-5, I hit a wall of traffic. Two accidents had stopped both I-5 and I-15 traffic south bound completely.

To make a long story short, it took me 31/2 hours to travel the last forty miles over clogged surface streets. If I had been riding the bike I was hauling, I would have been home in an hour. Two hours after I arrive home, I was in the Baja mountains and didn't see a car for 50 miles. What a bizarre day.

Tim Bernard, the vendor of those great dual sport side racks, has invited Robert Buchanan, Pauline and I to ride and white water raft in Idaho in August, so I'll make this article fairly short (I think).

KLR650 Stuff

Tim Bootle and others have been shocked at the $200.00 price tag on the KLR650 balancer chain; an outrageous price for a simple non o-ring drive chain. Rupert Humphrey, a Brit working in Latvia, probably has more miles on KLR's than anyone, and has blown up two engines (a 1987 and 1988). Both engines died due to balancer chain problems; one when he was traveling cross country almost wide open.

Rupert says that as of March, 1998, Newcombe Bros. Motorcycles Ltd. Of England sold balancer chains for approximately $86.00 U.S. currency. Their phone number is 44-1245-352-635 and the fax number is 44-1245-352-631. They accept payment by Master Card or Visa.

Ron Kellner of Buffalo is trying to help me set up a deal with a Toronto, Canada dealer who would sell us chains for $100.00. More on that when Ron gets back from his Colorado ride and I get back from two-upping it with Pauline in Idaho. Stay tuned.

By the way, Ron Kellner is extatic about the job Bob Bell of Precision Concepts did on his DR350SEX suspension. He couldn't believe the extent of the ride improvement. Dave Webster is happy so far with the job Bob Bell did on his KLR suspension. We'll get a further report when he gets back from an Alaska ride.

On our last Baja ride, Bruce Redding had no problems bottoming the rear wheel in the wheel well of his lowered KLR650, so I guess we can say the shock change did the trick. If you ride aggressively off road on your KLR with lowering links, it would be a good idea to put an extra 1/2 inch spacer on the shock shaft and do not use a larger than 25.5 inch diameter rear tire. I do not know if the bottom od the stock muffler will have enough clearance since Bruce uses a SuperTrapp on his, but I think it will clear okay.

I have done some further study on the balancer chain adjustment and can now recommend the following:

1. Adjust the balancer chain when the engine is hot.
2. Back the bolt out no more than 3/4 turn.
3. Then retighten .

If you have a pre 1996 model KLR650, you would be wise to update your balancer chain mechanism with 1999 parts. It would also be a good idea to install my balancer drive washers which are many times stronger than the springs and pins now driving your balancer mechanism and water pump. A properly set up KLR balancer mechanism can make the engine as bulletproof as it was intended.

A guy called me a few days ago wanting to know if I could tell him where he could get an 18 tooth counter shaft sprocket for his KLR650. I couldn't convince him that his engine could not pull an 18/43 gearing combination. Fortunately, I couldn't help him.

Unbelievably, Kawasaki is still selling the pre-1996 defective clutch baskets and balancer parts (according to my dealer). If you need to rebuild your engine, up date it with the new and improved 1999 parts. More later on how to install the improved balancer idler wheel (some machining is necessary).

Finally, I just discovered that Parts Unlimited sells a service free battery for the KLR650. The part number is DS-325753. Install it and forget it.

DR350 Stuff

Jerry Hjelle just recentlyhad all of his gasoline migrate from his Acerbis fuel tank to his crankcase. Don't blame Acerbis; there is an on/off position on the petcock. The offending part was an o-ring that cracked from brittleness and allowed the fuel to bypass the seated float needle. Thanks to the E.P.A, there are no more overflow pipes in the float bowls. They'd rather have the fuel in the crankcase than on the ground. The moral of this story is to replace that neoprene.

Helpful hint: When you first take off on your motorcycle, grab the front brake lever fairly hard a few times. This pumps the oil up into your forks and prevents that first few miles of stiction caused by overnight oil drain down.

News note: Bob Bell's Honda XR600 won the Baja 500 in June, beating out Jonny Campbell and Honda Racing's #1 XR600.

If you write me with a question, please enclose a self addressed, stamped envelope if you want a answer. Thanks.

Honda Transalp

Mike Sonzini

When the editor of Dual-Sport News offered a T-shirt to the first 2 people to submit articles about a Honda dual sport bike, I knew it was time for me to get busy. I've been riding a 1990 Honda Transalp for the last 3 years and after putting about 18,000 miles on the bike since then, I felt that I might know enough to write an informative review of the bike.

The Transalp (TA) was first introduced in 1987. The TA (also known officially as the XLV600) was brought to the United States in 1988-1990. The TA was designed by the Japanese, primarily for the European market. The TA is still sold in Europe. However, the bike is now produced in Italy instead of Japan, like the earlier models.

The engine is a liquid cooled V-twin with a 583 cc displacement. Seat heat is 33.5 inches (850 mm). Dry weight according to Honda specifications is 400 pounds (181 kg). Fuel capacity is 4.8 gallons (18 liters). Front suspension travel is 7.9 inches (200 mm) and rear travel is 7.4 inches (187 mm). Transmission is a 5-speed.

I knew nothing about the TA when I purchased mine. I had been looking for a BMW GS for a few months, but had not been able to find one with the right price. A couple of months before, a friend from Idaho had driven to Utah to buy a used TA. After not finding the right BMW, I decided to start looking for a TA. The next day in my local newspaper, there was a TA for sale. I went to look at it and knew the person selling it. Not knowing the value of such a bike, I just told him to be fair on the price and I'd pay him. I've learned a little since then.

The TA does a lot of things, although it maybe doesn't do any of them perfectly. I've ridden single track trails in Colorado, sand washes in Nevada, and everything in between. With the weight of the bike, it can definitely be a handful at times off road. Many TA owners I've met have been surprised to hear that my bike leaves the tarmac at all. I've had good luck running a Kenda 270 on the 17-inch rear wheel (about 5000 miles right now, with more to go). The 21 inch front wheel has had an IRC GP-110 for about 10,000 miles now, however, I am going to try a GP-1 in the next few hundred miles.

In addition to the off- road adventures of my bike it has also seen 400 mile days with a passenger and luggage. The TA is by no means the ultimate two-up touring machine, but it did work. Cruising at highway speeds, fuel mileage is 45-55 mpg. Range before switching to reserve is 150-175 miles. Another 25-30 miles can be gained by switching to reserve. Unfortunately, there is an good amount of gas that remains not really accessible in the tank.

Since the TA is a popular bike in many places, aftermarket parts and accessories are many. Unfortunately, the TA has not been imported to North America since 1990, and some of these neat parts or not easily accessible here. Common items to change, upgrade, or add are windscreens, brakes, crashbars, luggage, seats, and suspension.

A low front fender is the norm for the TA. I have changed mine to an Acerbis fender, mounted high after clogging up the low one with sticky mud and the front wheel not turning for a couple of miles. I'm looking forward to also trying the racks and luggage system that Tim Barnard and Happy Trails are now making for the TA.

There are many good sources of TA information on the internet. Probably the most complete, would be: www.ta-deti.de/index.html

Many other great sites exist and links to them exist on the aforementioned web site. There is also a TA mailing list. To get on the list, send an e-mail to, lists@paok.gr in the message body put "subscribe".

The TA has been a very practical, low maintenance motorcycle for me. If you should decide to give one a try, they can usually be found in the price range of $2500-3500. Most of the used TAs are in good condition since most have not seen much off road use.

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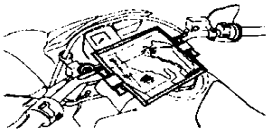

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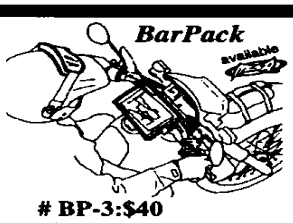

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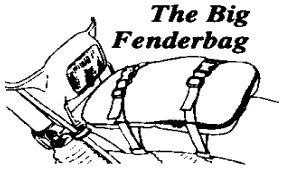

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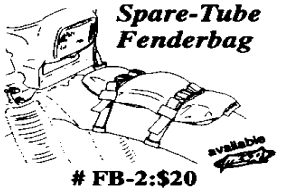

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EVENTS

1999 Baja Run
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Elden Carl will still be leading the pack to some of his favorite roads and hideouts, but the Baja Run will not be an official *Dual Sport News* event. Due to the difficulty of the planned route, he must limit the ride to the first ten experienced riders that sign up. Plans are still in the making, but the group will stage out of San Diego and enter Mexico on October 24 and spend two full days touring. The group will return to the States in San Diego on October 27. If you would like to participate in this event, please call Elden Carl a call at 619-440-2960.

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1998 has a petroglyph design on tan and the 1999 is the rally logo on the left chest on white. Both are short

PHOTO CONTEST
Canceled

Due to the transfer of Dual Sport News to its new editors and the fact that we received only one entry, the photo contest for the Dual Sport News 2000 calendar has been cancelled. I'm sure our new editors will have something up there sleeve in the future, though.

Laser Pro Duro Exhaust

Gino Pokluda

So you have a muffler dilemma, huh? Your stock KLR muffler is whistling along like an old VW bug and people point and laugh as you go. You want a new can but do not want all of the lights in the neighborhood to turn on when you start your bike and you down want to have to repack the darn thing ever couple thousand miles either. Seems like all of the aftermarket exhaust systems are like this, right?

The Laser Pro Duro is the exception. Laser exhausts are not readily available in the US, but in my mind, are some of the finest systems available. The Laser Pro Duro "Road Can" on my KLR is a beautiful, stainless slip-on unit that has excellent fit and finish. The first thing you notice about the Laser is its heft. It is only a scant 2or 3 pounds lighter than the OEM muffler, mainly due to its mechanical design. Unlike most other after market systems, the Laser "Road Can" model is fully mechanical as opposed to the fiber glass packed design used by other manufacturers. The "Race Can" model of the Pro Duro is fiberglass packed for those who wish to subject themselves to the noise and hassle of packing a muffler.

There are three problems right off with the Laser Pro Duro. First, it can only be purchased from an overseas exporter which makes it a bit hard to get and expensive to boot. With customs costs, shipping and the price of the muffler all added together, the Pro Duro cost me about $376.00 (US). Second is that since it is made in Europe for European motorcycles and getting one to fit a US spec bike is a bit chancey. For example, if I had ordered a Laser Pro Duro for my 1995 KLR650, it would not have fit because the 1995 European KLR650 is different than the US model. However, the US KLR650 is the same as the pre-1995 Euro KLR, which I knew. Third, although the Pro Duro has a spark arrestor, it does not have a USFS approved stamp on it.

Once you get by those minor details and acquire a unit that fits your particular bike, you will have a quality exhaust system that will last a long, long time. You will also get a system that is almost as quiet a stock which will separate the "I want power" from the "I want noise" riders. The Pro Duro is a two piece affair, just like a Supertrapp silencer. It is composed of an intermediate pipe and the muffler section. The intermediate pipe is stainless, and unlike the Supertrapp, it is baffled. The muffler section is oval with a nozzel that directs the hot exhaust gases down and away from your plastic.

Mounting is a simple affair with all pieces fitting together nicely and no play within the joints. Even the mounting hardware is a cut above. I did mildly jet my carburetor and use a K&N filter and the bike seems to make about the same power as when I tested the Supertrapp IDS quiet series with significantly less noise. With about 8,000 miles on the Pro Duro, it has turned a nice wheat color and has withstood, numberous rock attacks and offroad adventures. It is still as quiet as when I put it on, it doesn't whistle, rattle or offer any other clue that it has been abused.

So if you do not mind the prices of the Pro Duro and can live with a 3-4 week wait for delivery , then the Laser is a great choice. If those factors concern you, then you need to keep you money stateside.

M&P 011 44 990 703030

Senior Trip June '99 Jim Wimmer

No, no, no! It's not what you think! This is not about a bunch of kids just out of High School, It's about four guys and their dirt bike trip to Arkansas. The young'un of the group is 40 his next birthday and is a Senior "gonnabe". The other three are post 60 kids who refuse to take a "senior discount" at McDonalds and might refer to themselves as hold-out pre-seniors. Dennis Evans and Ron Prater are from Wichita. Ron won't be riding because of a cracked vertebrae he experienced in a late season argument with his snowmobile. Ron's come along as morale support and cocktail maker. I trailered up the XT350 and headed to Wichita on 6-24 -99 to meet at Dennis' house and convoy down to Daisy Arkansas (Pop. 122), some 450 n-files distant. Dennis' son David lives in Edmond, Ok. and will meet us in Daisy at the Daisy Motel.

David (left) and Jim Wimmer pose for a shot during the Senior Trip

Rain threatens and the forecast is for heavy storms. Does that deter us? No way! It starts raining before we depart Wichita and increases in intensity the further South we go down Interstate 135. At Brahman, Oklahoma we decide to pull off to wait out the storm. By then, you could not see the taillights of a car only 50 yards in front of you. To make it short, it rains most of the way down the Cimmaron cut-off to Tulsa, where we stop for lunch at Dennis & Ron's favorite BBQ place. Yummm, good! We arrive at Daisy about supper time and avail ourselves of the cuisine at the local cafe. Unusual food here! Ever eat fried pickles?

The Daisy Motel rather reminds me of the Tourist Courts of the '50's. It's modest and spartan; the facilities are relatively clean but really well worn. To be fair, the manager said that our "suite" is the last one that hasn't had its shower stalls and bath fixtures replaced. Winter business was so good that he was filled up all season and couldn't take time to make the repairs. Hope he gets to it soon, the wall in our shower looked like it was about to calve anytime. Can't remember the last time I saw a feather pillow that felt like it weighed five pounds. Strange! As I was lying there ready to drift off to sleep, a memory from the past came to mind. Who remembers the movie Psycho and the blinking sign at the Bates Motel? The Daisy sign blinked all night.

The weather was oppressive, to say the least. High humidity that you could almost cut with a knife. Seems like all riding in this part of Arkansas is "in the woods". There is usually always a canopy of foliage overhead. Several times during the more strenuous parts of the morning ride, that really required some exertion to stay upright, my goggles fogged so badly I had to stop. Finally I just let them dangle and wore only my glasses. They even required de-fogging if forward motion became too slow. David and I took off early both Friday and Saturday mornings since we are both early risers. We drove 10 miles to the next town where the cafe opens at 6 A.M., then came back to Daisy and lit out on the bikes for a few hours on the traits and fire roads. Dennis joined us each afternoon for some enjoyable rides on the woodland trails and back roads. David and his father, plus various other of their friends, have been coming to ride in this area for 20 years or more. This was a good thing since David knew the trails and back roads. I was lost once I was out of sight of the Daisy city limits.

Since David was "lead dog", I made sure I kept him in sight. He was kind enough to stop periodically to see if I was still behind him. I noticed he was making some wild gesticulations from time to time. Made me curious. He finally told me that he was swatting at the spiders who had woven their webs across the trails. Go ahead David, you stay in the lead position.

The ground was alternately rocky, sandy and full of exposed tree roots, which is all that's left when the rocks and sand wash away. David and his Dad said there were three R 's to watch out for in Arkansas, Rocks, Roots & Ruts. I think we found more than enough of each. It is really unbelievable how slick a slightly damp tree root can be. Imagine an uphill trail about a third covered with them, challenging! The rocks and ruts were something else.

Whoops! A tick just dropped onto my arm from out of the blue. Excuse me while I euthanize the little bugger!

The rocks in Arkansas fracture with mostly sharp square edges (good for traction) and come in a wide assortment of sizes. Samples of all of them, plus a few boulders, seem to

(Continued on page 19)

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… DR650

(Continued from page 10)

big problem when my butt could only stand about 100 miles on the stock seat. I'll address the range first. The big DR gets 55mpg on the road. The stock tank is 3.4 gallons. I already had a Maier Super Jug that holds two qt. That gave me at least a 200-mile range, which has been enough so far. It is important to note that IMS offers a five gallon unit should I need the additional range someday.

As mentioned, the seat and seating position was another concern. I am definitely not one of the inseamed challenged. Suzukis traditionally are pretty short coupled between seat top and footpegs. The DR is no different. I cut the footpegs off the brackets and rewelded them back on the stock brackets at an inch lower position. This helped tremendously in aiding the cramped seating position. It may place my feet in a lower position for serious off-roading, but I can purchase a set of Burly Pegs for a DR350 and they will bolt right on if the trail requires it. The seat is an excellent offroad saddle. It is moderately firm with a narrow profile that allows easy movement when you need to slide forward to weight the front end in the corners. That same great offroad saddle is a pain in the butt as a touring saddle. I have ordered the Suzuki gel saddle for it, but I'm concerned that it will be an inch lower than the stock seat and put me right back where I was with the seat/peg relationship. I may need a custom saddle. However, as I have accumulated some saddle time(3000 miles) over the last month, I have started getting used to it. Also I think a sheepskin would help for the longer rides.

Another area that is kind of quirky, is that I have had my sparkplugs loosen up slightly over a 300 mile ride on two different occassions. The DR uses twin plugs for efficient combustion. The motor is velvet smooth at 70 mph or less. It starts to get a little buzzy at 80 mph. The plugs are the ultra small diameter CR10 NGKs. I don't yet know if it is a problem or an annoyance. I'll write DSN if and when I find out an answer.

I have utilized an aftermarket replacement windshield for an older Yamaha Exciter snowmobile on several of my dualsports. I drill three small(1/4 ") holes in the numberplate part of the headlight and bolt the windshield to it. I then ziptie the edges to my mirrors. This has worked on numerous occasions. It doesn't have any adverse handling reactions and it definitely takes the high-speed windblast off my chest. I have tested it to 100 mph and it doesn't fold over or break. It is simple and quick to remove or mount and it only cost around $25.

I have ordered the luggage side rack supports from Tim Bernard of Happy Trails Products and am planning a remote road (dirt) tour down to Northeast Nevada. When I have completed that ride I will send an update report on problems and or situations encountered. To date, I am very happy with my choice and I look forward to a long and lasting relationship with my big DR.

One thing I have noticed is that the DR feels lighter than my KLX or KLR. The weight feels lower and not as noticeable. It feels more like a dirtbike. I definitely feel like I have more control over the front end on fireroads and logging roads. Interestingly, the DR has more travel than the KLR but about the same or slightly less seat height. Also of note, the DR features an adjustable ride height. There is a second mounting option on the shock and when paired with sliding the forks up in the triple clamps and installing an optional shorter sidestand, you net a two inch lower seat height which could be valuable to some. The bike already handles fast sweepers like it is on rails. I can only imagine what a canyon strafer it could be with the lower center of gravity and some stickier street tires. Speaking of tires, I am on my second rear and first front. However, they will both need replacing soon. I intend to stay with more offroad oriented rubber in spite of the lower life expectancy. I live about four milesfrom the end of the pavement and I dislike having the front end with a mind of it's own.

... Senior Trip

(Continued from page 16)

cover all the steepest uphill and down hill trails (depending on whether you're coming or going). All the small stuff seems to wash down hill, leaving the rocks alongside the ruts and among the roots. Stay out of the ruts. If you must get in a rut,(pun intended) it's best to keep both wheels in the same one! Boy, does it ever get squirrelly when you get in two ruts at the same time! Things want to swap ends.

The voice of experience offers a word of caution. When ascending a rocky, rutted and or rooty trail, be sure to let the rider ahead get all the way up before you start. If he bogs down half way up, you're stuck! It is really hard to get moving again part way up a steep, rocky slope. Momentum is everything! While trying to slide back down with the power off, I did a reverse highside when my right foot found only air. Help! David came to the rescue and we got the XT back on its feet and down to the bottom for a fresh start. After a serious rest period, to let the respiration, perspiration and pulse rate get back to near normal, the second run was successful.

David and his Dad have been coming here most years since 1978. The rest of the story is that they have been using the same bikes since 1980 and 1982, respectively. Dennis has a 1980 XL 1 8 5 S Honda. David has a 1982 XL25OR Honda. The amazing part is that both of these machines languish in their garages for about 51 weeks a year and are pulled out just for the annual trip to Lake Greesom and the Daisy State Park. Equally amazing is that they still give yeoman service and get their owners around and back with little protest. It's hard to kill a Honda! My own 1994 XT350 Yamaha gets ridden more often. It went to Colorado for a week in the Summer of '94. The rest of the time it gets lots of miles cow-trailing through the Flint Hills here in Kansas. Last time I was at Lake Greesom was 1991. I had a KL250 Kawasaki and a 1970 XLIOO Honda for my 13 year old nephew. We did mostly fire roads out through the Weyerhaeuser timber lands. The Bear Creek trail was too tough for nephew and the little Honda. Traiall around the lake have been laid out by the Corps of Engineers. All are passable by stout motorcycle and rider. Some require more nerve (or less brains) than others. Many are too narrow to be easily passable by large 4 wheel quad cycles. All two wheel travelers should be glad the quad runners try it. Their bulk helps keep the trails fairly clear in most spots.

Some of the more level trails were fairly well traveled (by quad cycles). On the less traveled trails, it was like watching your riding partner disappear into a long green tube of vegetation. At places, some of the tracks were barely perceptible. If the trail went right or left ahead of you, it disappeared. You had to watch the vegetation for the faint hit of the trail left since the last quad cycle had pushed back the green undergrowth. One thing for sure. A 62 year old body doesn't recover as fast as it did 20 years ago. All the upper body exercise from dodging rocks, roots and ruts left the neck and shoulders calling for the Flexall 454 ointment! Think I may stick to the flat lands in Kansas from now on.

A Flatlander's View Of Arkansas

While staying at Daisy, I found it difficult to navigate the paved roads. Signs were scarce and everywhere there was the interminable sea of foliage. All the houses and mobile homes along the way had a similar appearance, with numerous cars and pickups in the yards. I tried to devise a navigation scheme using Road Kill. Road Kills are temporary landmarks, at best, but I was only going to be there for a few days, so it didn't matter. Coming into Daisy, I knew we were 4 miles out when I spotted the dead coon on the west bound shoulder. Farther along, I knew we were 2 miles out when the "mystery mash" was spotted in front of the Country Side Church. I know, I could have used the Church, but that would have upset my plan. The mash might have been Armadillo or Opossum, couldn't tell which. Two tenths from the motel, an expired Armadillo marked the center of the road. It also produced an olfactory experience that could be recognized in the dark. When using this system, be aware that new landmarks may shup where you least expect them. Also, if you have a chance to produce your own landmark, be sure its not black with white stripes.

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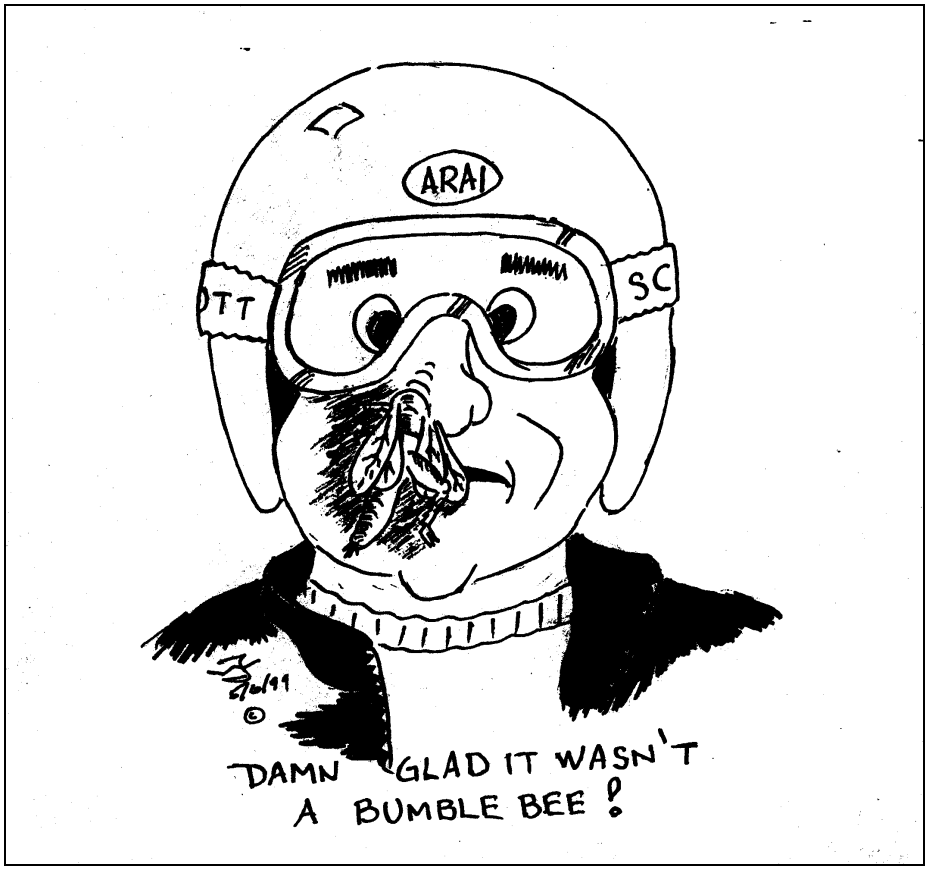
LEATHER CHEEKS



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